

visit me when the next golden day comes

the first of two notes to *her*

from here on every person i ever even try to love will be in your shadow. i cant believe it's over.

chapter one
“everything near and far”

it's all green, grass shed hills across each other in their own pale but saturated shein. it all fulgurates, from reflective to in shadow. i learned that today “fulgurate” or shine. the sun does that, fulgurates or maybe blinds or makes not see. that is only if you look at it, otherwise it does the opposite. to reveal or remove visual obstruction. it sways so freely, i bend down, i look over my shoulder, there's no one. i'm alone here, it's like lying in your bed, though the bed burns below, floating high above hills, water, and heads. it's like nothing other, in the place of someone else, the sun stood. it began to bend, just like me to the grass, the sun to the sky. i scream. i scream as loud as i can, i scream until my lungs are dry, until my teeth cling to my gums, refusing to let go, until i feel i'll cough blood, until my throat becomes purple. i look up from my hands, my eyes inching from the earth to air in each other, above my bent knees. i fear it, so apocalyptic or divine, it's too much to see, too much to touch, too much to measure. i have to tell myself “but it's only a dot”. it's only a circle in the deep setting sky. deep. i shut my eyes and i'm home. in my room.

it's a small place, or it feels that way compared to a living room or kitchen. it's always dark, especially devoid of natural light over artificial. the light of my television is the most present. people dance in there, it's like alien life within my own little empty black world. ive got cds, gifts and left away items from my father. thirty seven five inch plastic disks holding the music of important people, people that are consumed and praised.

“oh, oh, chéri oui”

i close my eyes and imagine her, just like on the cover of the album. she throws her umbrella and dances under and above that deep. i take a breath. sprawling yellow. i dance with her as our bodies contort at the seam of rhythm. i can't really tell what she's saying, i feel it's something about love or infatuation.

“oh, oh, cheri oui”

always looking, under that black umbrella beyond and beneath yellow, eyes so blue, almost angry, almost menacing, so still though, so content. i don't get it. i just don't, it's just beyond me. how? why? in this entangling yellow, she sits between confidence and fear. that's what she wants, to dance right? what else is there but expanding and retracting, to be the yellow, to take control. although, she sits in silence, useless umbrella, useless space, useless glare, useless examination. and now with that she's succeeded and rules the space she's swallowed by, i'm dancing in cold yellow, my eyes are closed, my fists are clenched. i sink.

“oh oh, chéri oui”

i open my eyes and im at school, my feet in march. my fingers touch and pass cold aluminum. the chatter is always oddly safe in a reassuring amalgamating way.

“i didnt even study” one a “i didn’t either” two a “we’ll fucking fail” three a “it’s geography, it really doesn’t matter” four a “it does to my parents” five. and a conversation, completely isolated and self indulgent or with complete intent toward the interests of self, though here collective. one to and on one. one, two, three, four, five. my fingers tap them, naked and sterile. they’re red, you can sort of tell which is empty and full, it’s wondrous almost. i ponder what’s inside, as obvious as it may be, i found that people rarely conform to my or maybe anyone else’s form or idea of convention. might there be bags of dead insects, the bones of a lost pet, matches and gasoline, or maybe just a passage, a tunnel elsewhere. i used to suspect doors and alike i couldn’t open to lead to other worlds, ones that ive been forbidden from seeing, i thought they might be the cause of madness in people and where tvs came from, for a while i even attributed these worlds to my fathers disappearing, though you really can’t let go until you open and close every door in sight or someone who has tells you. still it lingers, that same idealism has been one of the diseases plaguing the back of my mind. wait. i could swear the halls were full. second period, i tap the same tune on my desk. i hum. my eyes are closed. i think of nothing, my mind is devoid if not anticipating just before the next beat. my name?

“sorry.”

“i’m sure you are, now”

gone. everything i cared about, gone. momentary tranquility, momentary anticipation, maybe even fear. gone. how could you? for all that’s known that moment was my everything, it’s so common for them to do it though. anything for their own sake, to talk in thin air. it’s strange, like a singer interrupting their performance to silence the crowd. in the end you just destroy yourself, your singing, performing, teaching self. my name again.

“come on, come up”

i would rather not.

“me?”

i’m sure.

“yes, come up to the board here.”

i want to laugh.

“now, what di-”

blank, blind.

ring. slow chapel, period to period, room to room, through doors and hands. i find im in no hurry when within its walls, it’s like i’m wasting its time, i bet it hates that. i’m so tired. my eyes are just so

dry. i leave, it's been enough, this form of this day has been enough. the sun is so high, i look up, oh god. oh god, it's lifting me. my feet grow further and further from this, this.

“oh god.”

i put my hands to the concrete, why is it, its so?

“hollow.”

i hyperventilate, intentionally though. it ends in a long exhale, there's no need to see it now, i'm going home. almost limping. i hum on the way, it's the tune of my favorite song or at least my favorite song at the moment, “here she comes now” by the velvet underground. from a hum to a recital.

“if she ever comes.”

i like him, i saw a picture of him and the band, i forget his name specifically but he was, i, i'm not sure.

“now now, now.”

this is my favorite part.

“oh you look so good, oh she's made out of wood just look and see.”

i saw another album of theirs at a record store, the one with nico. i like her, her eyes at least, i haven't yet heard her music though. wait. i may have gone the wrong way. no. i'm wrong, i usually walk on the other side. this crunch beneath my foot. it's a. a bug. a beetle, black with green insides. the beetle all beneath me, why was it alone? its upper body and legs still squirming and pushing. oh beetle you won't survive, you will never recover. i exhale, i've made up my mind, you'll come with me.

“do.”

i pause.

“do you think?”

within my palms this beetle all dead.

“i don't.”

“this beetle.”

isn't speaking, unthinking. i killed you beetle.

“i was beneath you, below eyeline. it wasn't your fault.”

half a beetle. empathetic ghost like little voice. voice in my head. i still look down on it.

“murderer!”

farfetched. i think we're collector and victim, though i can't plead innocence.

“oh beetle half between these hands.”

as it stops twitching and squirming i stick my tongue at it, i may want to cry, i may want to think. whatever, i'm going home.

“you.”

we're going home. i place the beetle in my closet, above my clothes, beside my monopoly board and box of “little trinkets and trash”. i've decided to play miles davis' sorcerer on my mothers record player. she doesn't usually let me touch it or any of her and dad's collection. might i break the needle, scratch, blemish or crack the vinyl, misplace something. it may just be sacred. then again, atop it newspapers and books are housed, and it all slowly grows dusty. first, limbo. beautiful cover, she's looking at, she's looking at the lamp. facing the light. our sight just through the hall and past our brownish green couch and armchair, dark red and white persian rug, portraits of family members i've never met, cluttered coffee table held to balance by my old dr. seuss books, mail casket, plants, and kitchen. we stare together, all too serene. wait this is perfect, my hands above the lamp. da dada da da dum. such silhouettes, matter to not matter, to make light lack. a spider, an umbrella, a bird, a heart, i can't think, a square, a circle, a triangle, wait i can think, a lollipop, a squid, a dog, then just my hand, then more just, nothing, somehow being that and no longer lacking. i turn it off and push these brown, heavy curtains agape. i'm hungry.

“hm.”

perhaps eggs.

“hmm.”

maybe toast.

“hm.”

the beetle.

“no.”

i've decided upon a banana. simple fruit. blackened.

maybe rice.

“hm.”

perhaps yogurt.

“hm. oh my god.”

i need to hurry. i choose. wait. the banana. leaning on the counter, in hand a banana, through my ears miles davis' vonetta, in my eye tile and shoe, in my nose a soil like nondescript discrepancy, and in my mouth, soft and yellow, sweet and tender. simple fruit, how long had it taken you to grow this way and be consumed? this song in my head. da dada da da dum. over and over. you know i believe in how. right, something, abbey road.

it's about three now. i'm so bored. this petty feeling, over my head. such an endearing, humbling boredom. my sister will be home soon. it's four now. my sister's here. the phone rings, i hear her walk. she stops. she picks up the phone. she walks just out of the hallway.

“here.”

its my school, i'm sure.

“hello.”

“hey, i think we have.”

i put the phone down. a few steps and a few minutes before its ringing again.

“hello.”

“sorry i think i went out but. uh.”

hes hesitant.

“do you wanna come see my band?”

i bet he's squinting, i bet his lips are together, all tightened with flat anticipation “where?”

“we play at helena park in like three hours.”

“how did you get my number?”

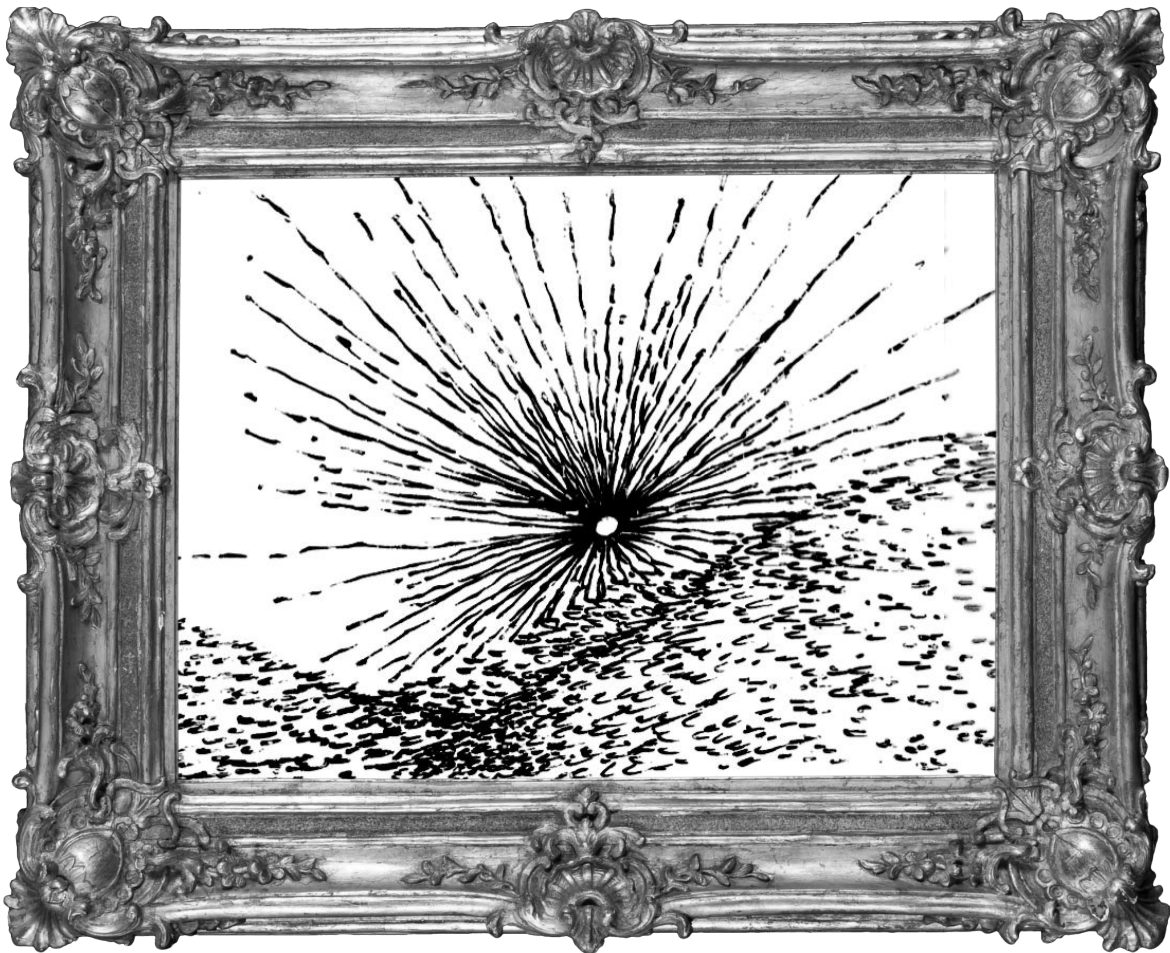
i may be a little inquisitive.

“i asked vera.”

vera’s an old friend, a truly out of place source.

“will you come?”

will i? i think. i’m bored. i hang up. this is strange, an uncomfortable new obligation, one with a faint excitement. i didn’t even ask his name or what his band plays. why not? why? i’m not intimidated, i’m not repulsed, why do i think i shouldn’t? instead i could read, watch television, listen to music i know i like, i could clean my room, i could write, or i could go. i fill my time making due of those suggestions. it’s seven now. i’ve decided to go to the park. a crowd, vera waving.



chapter two
"biding your time"

so far away this music is sort of shrill. it's kind of like iggy pop but melodramatic or the beatles' "i want you" but more calm. they play for something like twenty more minutes and at the end i leave. or i try, just after my eighteenth cautious unthinking step i hear my name. its vera and three others. i turn around, she's waving that same half seeking, joyful wave. i walk in their direction and stop underneath the orange radiance of the street light overhead, beneath dark blue to black sky, above flat grey concrete, in front of houses teeming with unknowing domesticity, it's off putting. my hand or more fingertips on the cold, towering lamp, seven more steps and they're right here. nearly claustrophobic.

"hey!" the wave is faster, she's excited.

"hey."

the wave falls contently from its peak.

"this is brandon."

she points at someone with black hair in a buzzcut, brown eyes, sort of mangled light blue jeans, dirty white sneakers, and a white band tee, i believe it's depicting devo. the drummer.

"em."

in a green dress, shining like satin, like grass, white lacey socks, black shoes, long blonde hair, hazel eyes, and a boom box.

"and gabe."

the bassist. light blue cardigan over a white band tee, curly black hair just above his shoulders, light blue jeans, and black boots.

we walk, they were in conversation at our clashing, it's nothing for me to interject in. this chatter. vera's different, not as i recall. she's more outward. in elementary school we were neighbors, we thought we were explorers, we thought that being as "we" was an unearthly comfort. in middle school or more, sixth grade we would sit next to each other, trying to remain behind everyone. we would hide during gym and alternate between the lockers whenever we were searched for. she was always so matter over mind, i think that remains though, it's just more commercialized, less alienating. she's not wearing glasses, she's not five feet tall, her hair's not in a ponytail, and her head's not downward. this is so weird, it's strange i can barely even recognize her. how could she recognize me? oh god, all blank faced, like everyone and no one.

"what have you been up to?"

out of nowhere, vera makes me feel small now. she faces me, looking down, im novel to her, its like im some kind of relic. what do i remind her of? this isn't right.

“nothing.”

“something, anything.”

i wonder.

“i guess whatever, nothing notable.”

“what music are you into?”

brandon speaks.

“you like sonic youth?”

em speaks.

“never heard of them.”

they all look at each other, i'm out of the know.

“what's your favorite song?”

brandon asks.

“generally?”

“yeah.”

“something.”

“named what?”

he's a little dim or maybe it's obscure.

“no, like the beatles right?”

vera knows, it's a bit of relief.

“yeah.”

“good track, good album, because is sick.”

em says, i'm not so familiar. this introductory conversing moves along, and so do we. i hadn't noticed entirely but i was following them, not behind but just amidst. this dying claustrophobia, with that ungrowing comfort. almost paradoxical. step, step, step. and this motion has carried us to the record store, it's closed. the lights are dim, the neon sign is off. em knocks, a pattern, an odd one. we wait. the first thirty seconds are content, it grows the opposite direction until the second minute at which we walk to a white car beside a lamp post, gabe, em, and brandon sit on its trunk. they begin talking, vera and i stand near them, she signals me to come on. we walk around the parking lot.

“i missed you yo.”

“me too.”

“what have you *actually* been up to?”

“i guess.”

i have to think.

“school.”

“yeah but, like really, what do you do with compulsion?” withholding the air in performative, interest and ambition

“i write sometimes but i think the time spent compared to output is uneven.”

“uneven how?”

“it goes slow.”

“do you still like bugs?”

“what do you mean?”

“you always had that book. and you dug into ant hills, and caught beetles. actually it was like i was supervising you, i look away once and you're covered in bees!”

really? supervise? a sound's radiating from behind us at that green lit lamp post.

“it was like two hundred pages, why would you have that at like eight years old.”

“i haven't really thought about them, since fifth grade.”

“hm. dude, that sounds sad.”

really? is it?

“kinda. i guess.”

i pause.

“i think im just older now.”

i make myself exhausted.

“hm. that's why you jump, fall through its empty space. until ground's found.” with a wave of both hands at “empty space”, is she mocking herself?

dream like utterance. oh god. this isn't her. this isn't her. not the same way. i diverge, walk toward that white car and lamp post. she follows, we're here.

“this is sonic youth.”

brandon says, while eating and pointing, em hands me a cd case. it's for their album ‘sister’.

“track one, schizophrenia. do you like it?

it's ok.

“yeah.”

a fit of reflection, i see her face and its beyond the past. our past i guess. is the recollection of long walks with little legs mutual? what of everythings abnormalities and the reasons we would make up for their being, i know you know the sky's not the ocean's sister or that clouds are its little inhabited islands but wont you act. act like it happened. smiling. looking so fine, just fine. i catch my grin rising with hers. just chatter. em's humming. gabe's lying back, tapping in accordance with the drums. vera and brandon sing.

“her brother says she's just a bitch.”

a flash, the car's lights.

“let's go.”

em says and motions.

the door's unlocked now, schizophrenia stops, the door's now open, now behind us. it's warm and bright in here, that soft greenish yellow of the street lamp behind us seems so miniscule. it's like we creep up, a man seems to be hiding, just to the side of the "folk/primitivism" section. he's large, shaking, holding a third eaten banana. em runs toward him, gio, brandon, and vera more closely follow. what are they doing? i'm behind them, creeping. the man jumps out in an opened arm projection of juvenile terror.

"em, girl! it's been too long, you get bigger and bigger every time i see you! how's sis?"

he hugs her, bending head forward.

"mums fine, it's good to see you too."

"brandon!"

he holds on the "o" or "i" in brandon, small signs of familiarity, i no longer creep. he hugs him the same way. squeezed, brandon says-

"hey mick."

"who are these guys?"

i look at his face while em explains our identities, his hair's to his shoulders, muddled blonde, darker and more inconsistent than em's, tall, something like six three, a hefty brown jacket, like that of a construction worker, blue and baggy ripped jeans, a white, red ringed shirt, "vintegra records", strapped white sneakers, and that browning banana. she's done introducing us.

"well i'm michael."

at "im", brandon began whispering "mick, mick, mick" mocking, cheering. hands clasped, arms bent, up and down.

there's a sound coming from the right of us, it's obviously an old rock song in that gurdy, wide stereo sound. this feels properly solemn, still moments relay, i do have to wonder what they've planned. it's something like nine, i've been standing here for three minutes, i would think at least, in a blink they've all gone. that's fine, it is a nice place anyway, warm. i move between two sections, i recognize so few of the albums here, it's voidlike. i'm not sure where i heard the word but i'm definitely feeling it, voidlike, perhaps distinct but unidentifiable, it goes on and on. to my right "electronic" and the beginning of "classical", to my left a plethora of rock, "kraut", "swamp", "surf", "indie", "post", "punk", "blues". i can't help but mouth the oddity. im sure i had been to record stores, earlier in life at least, how could this feel so out of place?

heavy hive, my mind's on the creep, sleepytime, shallow sheets upon me, i thought i thought but oh baby i really hate, when i have to think.

a guitar, sweetly strumming, a voice not so familiar. im paused, the unease subsides, even staring at the checkered tile beneath me, even beyond that fixation on the browning fruit, and the bewilderment of nondescript images. i follow the sound.

so. i don't, i dont i dont and i act like i know everything, don't say that that's why you hate me, don't say oh god dont say that's why you try, that's why you try me.

i pass a television and vhs player on a cart, indistinct aisles of vinyl and cd, a cluttered bookshelf, posters on the wall, all oddly indistinct.

heavy hive you lie you hide me, heavy hive, my buzz is sick, i'm sick, sleepy and sickly. miss me, shallow, a sister, my sister, you sense me, how shallow.

gabriels's on the floor, singing. mick's strumming, on a stool a bit too small for him. between them, against the wall, brandon and vera, arm to arm. em's on this couch, a cream like corduroy couch, all over a mazelike persian rug, just like my mothers. i stay between the door frame, arm behind my back, tapping to the tune. the ambience of the last chord has entirely waned, mick gives brandon the guitar, from the stool, now coming closer to me. i'm immediately out of the way, it isn't fear.

“come now goose.”

in a mystical way, i follow him. this trudging man, idiotic in sorts.

“g's good, a few more years and he'll be a proper malkmus.”

“totally.”

“you got any pavement?”

i can tell i made a weird face at “pavement”, we're back at that folk/primitivism section. back over the checkered tile floor under a dimmed fluorescence, among plastic containing music i've never heard and may never hear. my face is coming back down, it's not so scrunched at the nose. i shake my head. a sudden delibracy with his walk had come with my reply. it's whatever. my minds off it now, on one level i think of our absence. the strummings's faint and the words fainter, they're obviously occupied. on another level, my absence from home. i'm sure there's no interest in my location, my mother and sister have much more to do than worry and it's not like this is abnormal. is it? how often am i gone? what a worrisome question. another level, my growing discontent, obviously out of place, this situation is nowhere near demanding. another level, tomorrow's saturday and i have no plan, obviously. its such a fucking drag needing a plan but really, im covered in school for another three days and i could list a plethora of ways to go on with my minds occupation.

“here.”

“what's here?”

“music, goose! pavement, crooked rain twice. take it. oh you've got a stereo right?”

“yeah.”

“have you heard it?”

“no.”

he hands it to me, fully upright, semi slouched, left handed.

“if anything, you've gotta hear stop breathing, a strong kind of um warfare i guess image, it's sad. but good sad. it's track three but don't skip the first they're practically just-s good.”

slight silence. he motions. i follow four steps behind. then my little laugh, its through my nose accompanied by my rising cheeks. it's not enough for attention to be roused. you couldn't misconstrue it though, it means im just about ready, i'm already feeling it, against good sense. and i'm yelling in my head now, it's overflowing. the four step gap widens, i go back to that little room, they're still strumming, vera's missing. four of my fingers are against the door frame, three, two, one, none, i'm leaving, i've left. running, just quietly enough. i passed vera, outside, smoking.

“yo!”

frozen. my inertia shut flat. i turn around just before the greenish, buzzing light, with so many more moths than before. a few dead at my feet. i begin to bend.

“sorry.”

i'm back to her.

“you're leaving?”

“yeah.” i hug her, warm, thin, each second it's chipping at the stone like feeling, sedating me. my contempt from flaring to waning. a lullaby, something like the way we would hum on the way home. sweetly, solemnly. i hear it, echoing that warmth, closed eyes, at her waist. it's like i could cry. my eyes open, how vile? why, i was just so close to it, i could almost hear it. it's like i've pulled myself from her, now i know i did, tear up. its light, im such a baby this permeating sulk and remembrance. sweetly humming still in my head. i wave and i run again. faster now, louder now. i hardly want to escape anything, i just want. i just want.



chapter three
"of all things out of place"

"to laugh good god!"

no treaty in my mind, this feeling's a total power. i'm floating over asphalt, this wind, it's like im not breathing, not deliberately. it flows through me, like windchimes, like an ocarina. still the humming, it's not just in my head anymore, it's in my mouth. my arms and legs fully mechanical, the wind and my music organic. what a petty triumph, beside it my minds all empty. i had fun. i'm having fun. after something like five minutes i utter-

"no"

this is off, a petty triumph but without victory. the sweet sound is gone, the wind is more dry. my limbs have lost their vigor, still mechanized appendages but different, needless.

"no"

an abrupt halt, where am i? i may have turned once or twice in that march but this is odd. i've run into a cul de sac, an open circle of inhabited homes with cars in front of them. there are five street lights, all sort of orange. there are seven houses, each of them has a large lawn, not near a notable uniformity. well, they were all a similar height, with similar door to curb distance and number of windows but what differed was placement of said windows, placement of everything in fact. ah! and texture, from the grass to the walls themselves, it all differs so much. no, it isn't. smothering? no it isn't, it's only the way. exhale. i walk. to a lawn, it's distinct.

"shut up, shut up."

at the lawn i lay, uncharacteristic grass, little starry sky. i glance at the street sign, "marigold ave". i drop my head back down. i'm not familiar. exhale. the words are coming to mind now.

"it's easier to say in somebody else's voice, i hate the way you play with my favorite boy, i wish that we could all just play together like we used to, but you dont think we're friends and i can't tell, im sorry its hard to know and its harder to spell, it's hard to make friends and it's harder when it ends, so please, dont, let, it end."

haha! it feels close but not there, the tune is good, but the words. hm. i won't evade, the knowledge of being lost is seeping in. it is sort of desolate, i'm fully removed from these inhabited homes, from this place at whole. oh god i could tear up, i already feel the cold, wet sting beneath my nose, and the blur has already come. oh god i'm such a baby. it's fully soundless. as soon as i notice it though, the wind exerts its bellowing wail. looking into the starry sky the desolation amplifies, i wish this grass were my bed. oh god i'm whimpering. my limbs are aching, how far had i gone? any monstrosity

could come from the circumference of my eyelid, fixed upon a morphing star. sniffing, im such a fool, what could have overtaken me. i'm fully crying, my chest is low, heavy, and dry. i've fully retreated now, i'm under new leadership, sorry, dictatorship, at the will of this hopelessness and i've found solace in forgetting it. entirely embryonic, forgetting this irrational collection of homes and the possessions of the people among and within them, forgetting the unchanging expansive void above me. i can't tell if i'm really in fetal position or it's the feeling i occupy in solace. "enough" what was that? no, i'm tired. goodnight.

goodmorning. what an odd dream, im sore. i glance to my left, it's two, midday. the sun never seems to be out, two of seven potentially sunny days in a week are shrouded in gray, and i've taken a liking to my curtains. or more, my fathers, they're thin, a browned- cream like white. they may have been sheets. they depict a pattern, something like flowers. the flowers are much more vivid in direct light and the entire thing is some luminescent pale yellow. it's that way now. mostly i mean, my window's open, its flowing, protruding three feet at most from the window itself. my shoes are still on, not my jacket though. weird. i take them off, my pants too. i change into shorts, i'm a whistle away from a lifeguard. oh! i fall, qui leckly and surprisingly quietly. under my bed! my remote! at a click the televisions on, two more and a cartoon. one of my favorites, ren and stimpy.

what a thrashing, abrupt wave! it comes so swiftly, the desolation of it all i mean, another petty feeling, a hopeless search for need and meaning, i hate when it gets like this. my head's in clay, grey and thick, a heavy block. i'm going back to sleep.

it's so much colder, darker. the abyss is back above me, oh how comforting. i feel the cold immediately but beyond it some strange hold, a soft, heavy hold. all the lights flash on and the families in their homeset houses are in frenzy. i hear the steel of pots and pans, clanking, the light wind of falling, the burst of force dispersed in the earth. then the footsteps, loud and nearing, then the sirens. all so faintly, opaquely. i can't stop looking at the sky, twinkling. my neck, it's moving! flash and i see myself, beneath a taxi. sleeping. everyone's so worried, then they're not, im rising, my eyes i mean, my body doesn't struggle under the running car, with headlights beaming in the houses that parents are telling children to return to, fruitlessly. what a spectacle my body is, three police cars, a surprising amount of people for the six. oh god no. it must be a thousand, i see more and more in my slow rise, more and more people, now piling onto the taxi and my carcass, its front right tire which sat picturesque on my chest, is now covered by writhing flesh, all too quiet now. drowned out. indistinct sound, a familiar tune, of course, this all just makes sense. it's getting less and less cold. the image entirely disappears and im left longing. no its back, ren and stimpy's still running and murakami's book is on my lap, what the fuck?

we're out of peanut butter, all i can think about is a peanut butter banana sandwich. "all i can think about" is admittedly far-fetched, there are other things. there are. it's ok, my mother leaves ten dollars on the counter something like every other day. before leaving i change clothes, i can't be in public looking like i know how to swim. or something. i leave. sun o glaring sun. my head's down, i watch my feet. its a fine sequence, for a while. one two three, one two three. i look up briefly. a car passes by, a red station wagon with baggage atop it, two women in the driver and passenger seats. one two three, one two three. they're gone. another isn't so far behind, a green, decaying sedan,

a man is in it. there's someone on a bike, younger than the others, he has a helmet and is much too intentional with the way he pedals. one two five nine eight one. an arrhythmic step to arrhythmic steps. seven two four? i stop, fall back on my right foot and extend my left, its a balance i can't hold but i'm surprised i've maintained at all. that warm sensation, one two three, one two three. i almost forgot, i don't really like spending too much time in grocery stores, i shouldn't be vague, by too much i mean more than fifteen minutes. i find that there's some kind of sorcery to them, the larger ones mostly, those fluorescent lights are against time. earth clock, sun, real time. they're cold, loud in some contrarian way, what a drag. the nearest one isnt too many of those things.

through these doors daylight shines, the front wall window laden. there are four cashiers with their conveyor belt desks at left from the centered glass doors, to the right a seasonal section which at moment is split between bags of mulch, bouquets of flowers and dry or canned produce, behind these two all aisles. It has a nostalgic air, o! in one of those placid sweet orange panes of light i met a woman. she said she was born in montreal and her back was a pain that no fiber's to blame and her name is one i can't quite recall. i didn't mean to rhyme, now. peanut butter. aisle six. skippy, jif, smuckers, general foods. crunchy, smooth. i sit, some while. smooth, jif. god i hate brands, what dumb names. i walk back, the name tag "hello i'm christopher". a normal name. it's \$2.34. "hello christopher", i'm so smug.

"you know me?"

idiot. i reach into my right pocket, in place of money i find some thorny, terrible thing. i flinch and check my left, paper. im gone, with \$7.66, peanut butter, and some vile companion. im careful in these steps, the ones in which i reach, the ones in which i intend to reveal. slowly, this familiar, brittle hardness, its blackness obscured by my fingers. "goodmorning", this beetle undead. the caution i enact is released, my gaze is downward and tentative. "no, its not"

"how so?" toying with me. its more fussily, dreamily.

"you're here, i left you in my closet."

"yes, until last night."

"you'll explain?"

"i will, some delirium it seemed, you went on and on, i had no room to speak."

"saying."

"you spoke of relief at."

i begin to drown this thing out, i cant disregard my appearance, it must be strange. its gotten cloudier. what was i thinking? the sun is so overbearing, why did i miss it then? i exaggerated the gray, shroud be fallacy. the sky is clear! nauseatingly. the beetle's back in my pocket, wriggling,

following my legs. a glimmer of refuge from this clarity looms, cumulonimbus hope, a slow approach from somewhere near junipers galley, a gradual, opaque, depressive curvature in the nastily veering skyline. trudging on.

i see no one. “speak now.” i command and wait.

“don't tell me you're at a loss for words, mouthy thing!” whats wrong? whats my issue?

“ah! i left off at your pity party. you know, vera was it? might feel the same way. just maybe, if shes as deranged as you. ah! and your way back home, highly concerning. who knows what treachery lies outside our room.”

“my room, don't feel so worthy.” in fact, “you've been shelved, how did you get here?”

“by your hand. pick me one will you?”

i look up. we're beneath an olive tree, up the slight incline of lancaster road, passing houses that reel the body in that same consuming way. i'll never know what they look like or who's in them or whats happened in them or what they smell like or what they mean to their inhabitants. i pick the thing its olive.

“thank you. you may have an obsession, you went on about your inferiority to vera. and her height, you made her sound a statuesque 6'3”. you're not *so* short. you spoke of her clothes, the leather, the boots. it made you angry, sort of.”

“enough, was that all?”

“not at all, i don't believe you spoke for more than a solemn six hundred seconds but you made use of it. you're awfully sour today, am i frustrating you?”

“more than you know, thing.”

“excuse me, i'll be brief, you said you met people, many, you said you like rabbits, you said goodnight.” that's swell.

“thats swell.”

it returns to my pocket, its olive to the ground. good god, what did i eat? arbitrary question, nothing i could think to eat would have made me so goo brained. but, if it matters, i ate a banana. and. how am i not dizzy? thats interesting. i ignore it. something overtakes that thought. juniper valley. the name's of simple origin, there are three lone juniper trees forming a triangle with mile long sides over that could i say, placid, green plain. you could call it equilateral and for that, alongside the non nativity of junipers here, and the general lack of plants that arent grass there; an anomaly. i'm sure i was there with dad, i had to be three years old. tiny, miniature self.

haha! im here. dad, “the tree- its”

i'm back, back at home. for the main event, my sandwich! i prefer thick white bread, toasted over salted butter. flick, a minute and a half and the nonstick pan is at prime temp. now butter, then bread. i flip and press by hand, its a fine control. golden brown. they're sitting, i stir the peanut butter. flip, flick and the heat's off. i cut the banana, its a bit grotesque, it makes me look away. its fine, the slices are meant to be haphazard. i take the bread, spread, place, and bite. ah! like all i've ever wanted! with a cold glass of milk, its complete. perfect.

“how was vera?”

my sister, its still in my mouth. how does she know?i just barely utter.

“she was nice.”

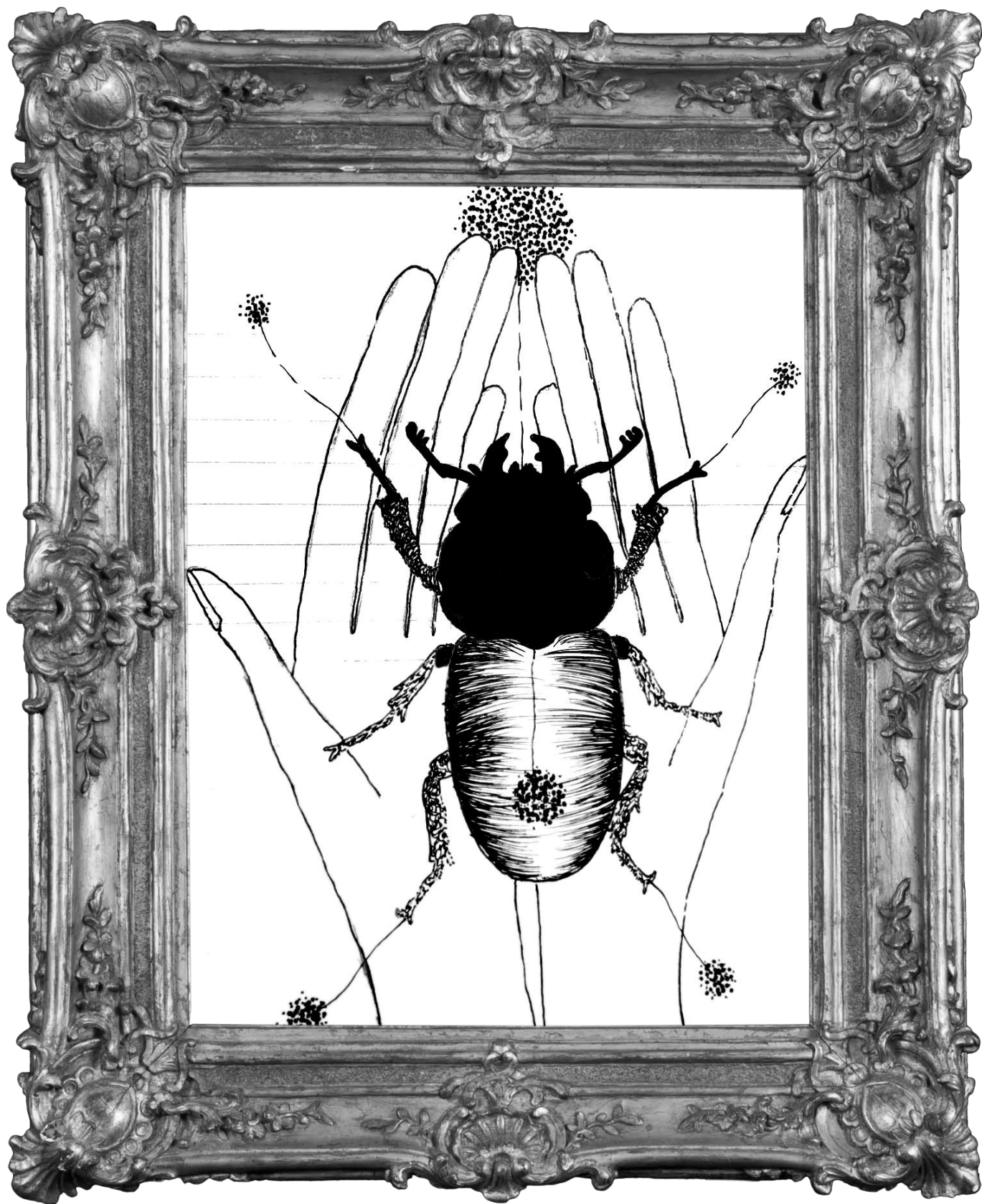
“cool. you had fun?”

i look to the left, i hadn't thought about “fun”. i don't believe so. did i?

“yeah.”

“cool.”

it plays back in my head. i have to pee.



chapter four
"recurring and passing"

night's fallen. i don't recall being tired, i'm sure i slept, i'm just as forgetful of my dreams assuming i had any. that's abnormal. i usually remember them. ah! i was just getting around to it, listening to the cd. the press of a button, it plays. i think i initially enjoy liner notes as much as or more than the musical subject. these are borderline nonsense, "laced", i'm in a rock ____", nonsense! the drums are nice, "no reels to remind you". it's good. i skip to track three. "stop breathin" yeah. it's good.

periodic sensation, between this overbearing craving for sleep i try to explain my sudden forgetfulness. forgetting has always been a tragic, terrifying prospect. i couldn't even say why. maybe lack of choice, its not like i *want* to forget my mothers birthday, or what i've eaten, i'm so tired, or dad's middle name, or. i sink, back down there. or maybe the vulnerability and subsequent weakness in not knowing. or maybe i like to harbor, collect, and forgetting is like losing an asset. or maybe it debases time and care. i hope i never forget. then again, it's no matter. you have to forget, make room for now. then again. no, sorry, its no matter. no matter at all, drifting and dimming to warm blackness.

its brighter. i see the street, lancaster in dusk. i'm not alone, i must not want to see this person, they're to my left, holding my hand. i just can't look. the sky is too compelling. "look at them!" in awe, no reply, no change. no, yes change, they let go. its so cold, i can finally look over. they're gone. "i miss you so much!" this mouth! i see myself, the back of my head, longing, crumbling in a dim cul de sac. this mouth! im eaten!

spit me out! there's chatter and music all through this banquet hall of a room, how queer this couch and its sixty seven legs, how strange these seven chandeliers, all different and inconveniently hanged, with contrasting temperatures of white limerance. just as i begin to see the man carrying this sweet tune, a blankets been thrown over my head, all dead with apple in mouth, to the spicket with me! whats on the menu. hence through im merely meat, flea! cant i cant, ive the cause and the limbs but not the ability or room, there stomach my tomb, flat, dark, warm, reddish room. from mouth to stomach, you've eaten me. what beasts with their hundred teeth and troth and heath, heed my warning i don't go down without a fight. what oddity this room emanates, with wriggling wooden floors and jazz in twos and fours, and the mass of walls covered with doors, once more these spinning chandeliers, the pianist owl headed. his back is turned to me but he stares, almost inquisitively at my state, i could swear he was in the right corner with a spider and pin cushion, the former spinning web to the two four tune in sickly croon. "dance with me, boy." this owl, deeply and sweetly, what an immediate trudge he's made, splitting the swell of guests to approach me. "come now, boy" i omit "yes yes, i will". his hand entangles mine with warmth, even through thick white gloves, and under the cold gaze of the faceless guests. ours is no waltz, but a spin, he simply spins me at sway with grace and an intent to betray his predacious stature. the faceless become shapeless, all is light behind this owls eyes. "what delectable hoffgus" "my the girls a savant" "oh heavens what vulgar movement" "i should never" "oh the pageantry" the owl is tip toeing to a squint. "madame. my darling, come up with me." he addresses me as such? "yes yes fine i shall". he leaps in a blink,

i'm still in the whirl. he lifts me, the ceiling rising as he does and we do, the guests and their empty, fleshy faces, disregard this spectacle. the ceiling above us begins to curve up and in, growing pinkish, writhing, toothy, "darling, sing for me at next train coming" he throws me up into this gaping hole of a ceiling, at this grin of a gate. "good godliness, have i been spit out?" "well i never" "oh dear" "mercy be with the lord" you've spat me out! i could kill you, i could kill, kill, kill you. so i do, no one should oppose me, "you've gone head against nature" i manage this ten pound fork of six teeth and silver frame to puncture and penetrate, remove and maim, i take another and another, white with sweat and owl milk soon to be red with blood of beast. the image fades. that's all. all i can see, red. it's the sun on my eyelids, sunday morning.

got struck by the first volley. hunger hits, i should really eat. i should really get to the library. first things first. the sandwich! two, and two glasses. enough, i'm off. just at the door i recall the book, i still have wild sheep, it's in my closet. i retrieve it, reach up into my closet, my hand just passes the thing before i snatch the hardcover. "good evening" the thing wants to play.

"not today" now, im off! four clicks and im here. not really, i'm not sure what a click is in distance. but im here no less. "mary!" the librarian, a wonderful bespectacled lady bent over the iliad, of blonde turning gray hair, flushed pale, freckled skin, cream knit cardigan and light blue and white striped dress. "whats my fee?"

"oh honey, all is well. you don't have one."

"thank you." the book in the box, my hands are free. "what do you recommend?"

"hmm. do you remember the brothers karamazov?"

"yes, i haven't finished it."

"i understand, you should try him again. i'd say, crime and punishment. or poor folk, its an earlier, simpler work. they're both undoubtable accomplishments. so, the former. its about a man, rodion or raskolnikov and he ki- commits a crime. it manages a broad view, why did he? to what end? what is truly criminal? he's physically and mentally ill but his friends and famiy get him through, dunia, razumikhin and whom have you, its set in petersburg, svidrigailov as a testament to its gloom, and. sorry thats enough, its in classics, row three, maybe column four."

"thank you!"

i walk off, i think of her. such whimsical, frustrated nuance, she looks up, floatily, her posture's careless with elbows entrenching a book, she catches herself before she rambles, dialectically stumbling. its as if she's caught off guard, flushed and fleshy. meredith, sweet meredith. i look back, so picturesque beneath skylight, among paper and binding, entranced. got struck by the first volley. its playing in my head again. write it on a postcard. ding ding ding! the third row fourth column of a nine foot tall gray aluminum case. i've found it, a paperback by fyodor dostoevsky, last

stamped december fourth, 1995. name; emily. i bring it back to her. new latest stamp. today, my name. blue ink, unlike the old red. "goodbye mary!"

"bye bye." sweet meredith, such a stupid thing, such an adorable, enticing thing. wait. good god! i have a crush on the librarian? i don't even like- maybe i just admire her peace and literary sovereignty. i don't know, its really no matter. no matter at all. "emily"

four clicks and i'm home. i sit the novel on the couch. mom's not here, she's off but she's got errands, victoria's door is unlocked, slow turn and just as slow push. she's not there. joni comes to mind, my mom has blue and ladies of the canyon. i play blue, it spins, cracks and "all i want" starts. god! i love this one "traveling, traveling, traveling, traveling" always gets me. "alive, alive" i could melt. back to the couch! i should eat, in digital green light, the oven says "12:38" but the microwave "4:16", i trust the oven. bacon, four strips. a blueberry muffin. there's no space on the coffee table, just as well, i'll sit on the floor. now, "on an exceptionally hot evening" to "the criminal, the monster!". "all i want" to "the last time i saw richard". 12:38 to 1:14, with a baron plate and baron head, blue's just ended. "its a thick image of grime, so brown", hm. what to play. i return the turntable to its prior form and check my discs. maybe. no, i need to focus. maybe mater. perfect! i take my player, plug it in three feet away from where i sit, and it begins. the choir with a foggy, wallowing sense. "and where is the money?" to "but sank into blank forgetfulness". voice to voice and then to now. that atmosphere. where do i go from here?

i should go outside. i do. i walk just to where the lawn ends and the sidewalk begins. now, what do i see? sky, blue, grass, green, faltering in spots with brownish yellow, houses, differing, of almost entirely lacking uniformity, cars, just as those homes, people, few, upward a man and his dog, downward a woman infuriated, hitting her steering wheel, a click from the former, three children with sticks matching there height, two fight with them and the other uses it as a cane, a click from the latter, behind the enraged woman, a man and a boy, presumably his son are putting in new plants, the boy holds the soil and his father holds the shovel. with birds in the sky and the shade of trees blotching the sun bleached image.

o sun! its a sickening thing. i could vomit. i merely glance at it, it scars my eyes, everything i see is obscured by that scar. an intangible, opaque white to blue circle following my eyes. i close them and its still there. its the only thing i could call "there" at all, suddenly, fiscally, suddenly i feel nothing. completely numbed aside from that faint warmth of weightlessness. i refuse to move my eyes or their lids. closer and closer to breathless. "got struck by the first volley, of the war, in the core" and it's there, my throat, my mouth and teeth, and ears at least. my obstructed gaze is pushed downward right. fuck, thats so annoying. my eyes open. i should go back inside. i do. i feel i've lost. how could i be so weak, those people, they're fine. what am i saying? i'm not so impressionable. then again, oh dear. i'm not so impressionable as to compare reality to that book, or any really. i couldn't, can't be moved, no matter the blank, flat feeling. i know my breath, i know my size, my shape, my thoughts. i'm not so impressionable as to use those people as an image of normality. god, those people. after standing in regrettable contemplation i run back out, to check. she's stopped, the kids have stopped, the man and his dog have gone, the father and son keep working. i've still lost, no matter their indifference to the tyrannical, maniacal, incessant star, i've lost, severely and cowardly.

kidding. “haha”

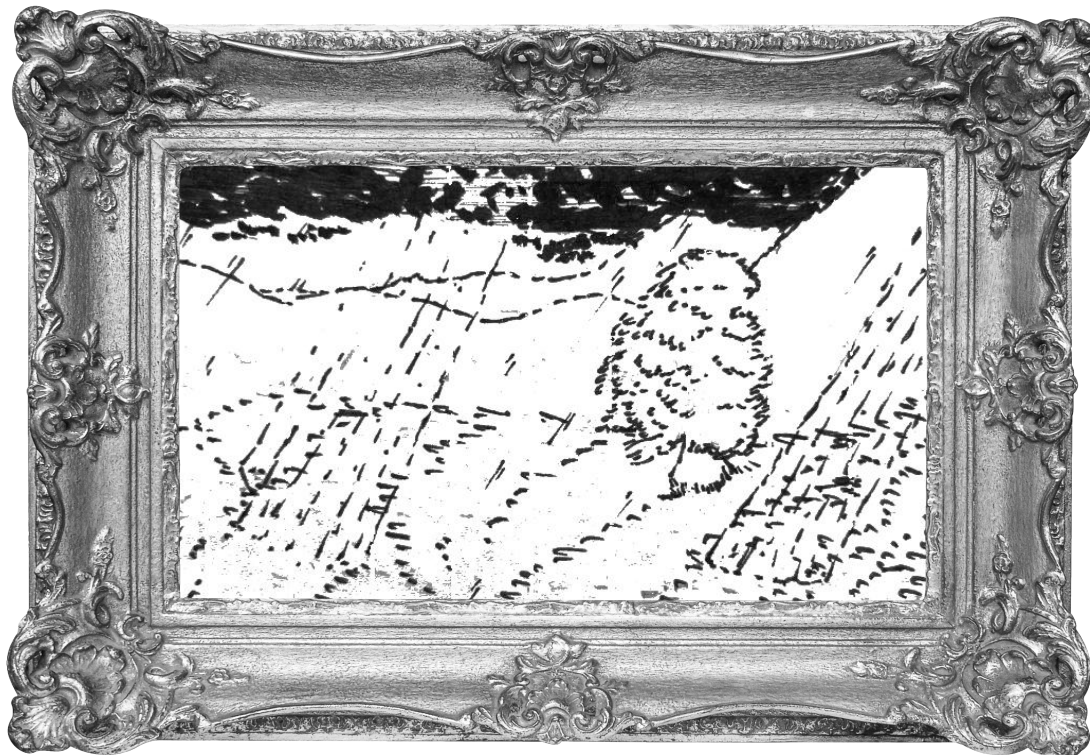
with hands pocketed, head down, and mind awander, i close the door and walk. i mouth.

“come to me, emily and general enmity. the general pity's me, im weak, im frail, he says without fail to my mother in mail whenever she asks if i can join the army. bar me from war, i'll settle the score and set flame to thy home and take chastity make whore. indivisible, emily and i, two things that will never part.”

it must be something like half past four. god, i lost.

“emily my dear, i fear your love has made me wide in body and pride. i couldn't ask for more, mother says now i go to war. not to die or lie without life but to fight with middling strife in the way of the worlds roll and play. i'm going, set to sea in an hour; do i want to? i couldn't say, i can't. or may gods good will sour.”

no that's not good at all. i look up, six steps and i would have hit a lamp post. that big cloud inches ever closer, tailing the light, moving air. i walk up, to where the houses end and the highway comes to begin. i look to the right as i pass minelli park, where andy's ice cream truck sits and something like eight children line up before it with few parents beside them. other familial fragments are scattered around, dotted between slides and swings. by now the slight incline of the land composing lancaster ave has long flattened. my glance returns to my hands and the pavement. i walk on.



i pass the truck stop, it and the four sixteen wheelers in front of it. two contain gas, the silver cylinders i can almost make out my reflection in, and those triangular signs of caution tell me so. the others are food, recognized simply by way of branding. i could say seventeen steps before im run over. they go at least sixty miles an hour, the little flowers of white petals and yellow core bend with there passing. i take fourteen steps, i feel there wind. hard, not hateful but abrasive. it's a cooling sensation and a force indefinite. i walk along. the opposite direction of the incoming vehicles. from the thin stream of lancaster and commercial residence, the valley's revealed. open and wide.

the ranger sits almost atop the nearest mountain or more closely mound among the row of them; in a cabin of two antennae, blinking red lights atop them. there are barns in the distance, cattle, mostly cows, just as far away. the plain's green, grayish and purplish with that creeping cloud. the sun peeks through in spots and beams come to the land as if it'll be abducted or scorched. the beams themselves take form as white and ghostlike in the air. it reminds me of the way light flows in from windows, with dust fluttering and revealing itself. the air is getting colder, sharper, more dense, it may rain. the truckers are talking. a herder, almost like an ant from here, has his sheep yield before the fourth yellow light of the freeway. i keep walking.

it's terribly lonely. almost miraculously, when the admittedly pious, arbitrary thought comes, i look to my left and begin to worry. not for myself, but this person, they've a cast and black hair. they're on the ground, sitting with legs bent and feet outward behind them. it's like they've lost, like they're devastated. its almost contrarian among the pretty limerence limerence of those little flowers turned feeble. feeble almost invisible, "could i help you?" not a word from this person, the road and its running, raving engines are between us. awareness of me lacks in us both. haha. i keep walking, past that person and those flowers. i look back, their head's down. catatonic. i look forward, joni's come to mind again. her words, the "lonely road". in all truth im directionless, it could be a sort of unnecessary prodding but that person is more than piquing my interest. i keep walking. and if it rains, they'll be cold and alone. god! i think i'm some savior now. i can't give them anything. i walk.

turn, back toward them, i stop with perfect adjacence. cars pass and in their unrelenting motion i see my reflection with that cloud above me, in mere second long bits. all too blurry and gray, gray on any colored mirror. i just stare. the cars have just about stopped, im sure they hold for the herder. i walk to it. like a mouse, over their shoulder. "hey" their head rises, they glance at me, the gaze is held. i could call it disconcerting or even concerning.

"hey, yeah. can i help you?" i'm the strange one?

"i was gonna say the same thing, sorry." i walk away. that face. it's pretty, so normal considering the circumstance. five steps, the middle of the road. come slow fear, weight on my right shoulder.

"where are you going?" they've come to me, i didn't want this, of the past im sure, of now im uncertain. i did, i did prod and now i've got sod. we keep walking, off the road and down the valley.

“i don't know, just kinda walking around.” now i think my concern is justified, flipped in sort, but worthy no less.

“i'll follow you” said so normally, with a heavy composure. “for a second, you could actually help me” with a piercing, happy vigor.

“with what?” i say it lightly, almost excruciatingly so to calm us both.

“i was so bored. today's been a riot though.” we walk, that weight is no longer on my shoulder, with right hand in cast, this person, this spectacle, makes motions as it speaks. “i probably looked weird, i didn't want anyone to worry-”

“i wasn't worried.” i interject, to reassure and sedate. it doesn't work.

“but you wonder, don't you?”

“i.” looking at me, at my height, with some sort of inquisition. it's an almost medical gaze but around that a playful face. “did i?” i'll fend you off. “i couldn't say i did, actually i take it back, i did wonder, now i could say woefully.” that gaze is unshaking, a smile comes to its face.

“oh” smile wiped. “i didn't mean to make anyone sad either, but it's really my business. to make someone else's business yours is, nosey.” it just comes to mind, the way i look, i feel the annoyance in my face but in the eye of this person's gaudy obliviousness, it's like i don't even have one.

“maybe” we walk in silence, an hour must pass, i stop at things immediately interesting. a patch of yellowish white, flat and vine-like, berries of no apparent origin, wispy dandelions, an opening of bare soil, perhaps with something buried within it, and untouched bones all would evoke sudden interest. i would assume its past six, rain has been trickling for twenty minutes. all i hear is our footsteps, the warm whisper of wind, and rain falling, touching all above earth. another five minutes and this person starts humming. soft and sweet, like lullaby and secrecy. “hmm, hmmm, hm, hm, hm, hmm, hmmm, hm”

“what's that song?” i don't think i'm so interested, i've just felt some strange tension, like i needed to speak. or someone.

“it's caroline, no” flatly.

“by who?” prodding.

“the beach boys” plainly. looking forward as it has this last hour.

“what were you doing?”

'you're still thinking about that?' i am, the juxtaposition of that initial image and now is just too substantial.

"yeah."

"i was sitting. sorry, i was thinking. i should tell you about today, i said it was a riot." with finger to mouth and eyes up, just making up a thought. "i just started walking and i don't know, today's just so funny, could you imagine? sunday, the most serious day, a comedian? last night my aunt came over, i like her, i really do. she has those bug eye glassees. its weird, with that she looks goofy, beyond that look though, she's" a pause. "intrusively!" the word must have just come to mind. "intrusively militant, she says she smells my room or something in it. she went in without me knowing and found my c- something personal. i don't know, i just don't like people touching my shit. she hinted at knowing about it. oh! she takes her glasses off when she's trying to be serious but just looks even more uncanny. i didn't get mad at her, its her right to be interested. this morning though, it was gone! totally out of place, i know she threw it away, i'm sure of it, but if i go to her, i don't know if i'll be" another pause. "composed"

"what was the hint?" do i care? i think i just want to fuel it, i want it to keep talking, the spectacles rambling is so, could i say, inward? its with care, like its memory is near directly transcribed.

"she said my room's interesting" another, a second long. "and she left one on the ground! this morning, up until eleven, the day only got funnier after that. um. ah! my dog, was running in circles, chasing his tail but it was between his legs, she might still be now. all our oranges had gone moldy, i took them to my room, they're in a jar now. oh! my mom hates her, not because of her militance" this may be the fourth. "i don't really know why actually but they bicker like little kids, it never goes past three minutes of sour remarks though. i don't really know why she came. its whatever, when she's not annoying she's fine company."

its mouth, its manner. it really just is pretty. i can hardly think of better words.. walking together, directionless. two clicks from here's a big tree covered in light. i run to it, i can't say why. it follows me, running too, slower but more effortless, careful to keep its right arm still. the item and i stand beneath it. we sit. i breathy silence, sixty seconds.

"what were *you* doing?"

"um." not a word comes to mind, i absolutely scramble, scraping my skull for recollection. "i was just walking, then i saw you, you really did look so sad. and. between those cars you just looked." five. "helpless."

"helpless? woah man." with sarcasm i think, definite denial. "well i wasn't, i just like the spot." to reassure me? six.

"man! hopeless? i will never sit outside again" its hung up on it.

“i said helpless” a minor correction. “but theyre both strong words, i don't know, i guess i was just bored.” then noticeable silence. that pretty face looks up at me, its alarming.

“whats your name?” i answer, i lie.

“whats yo-”

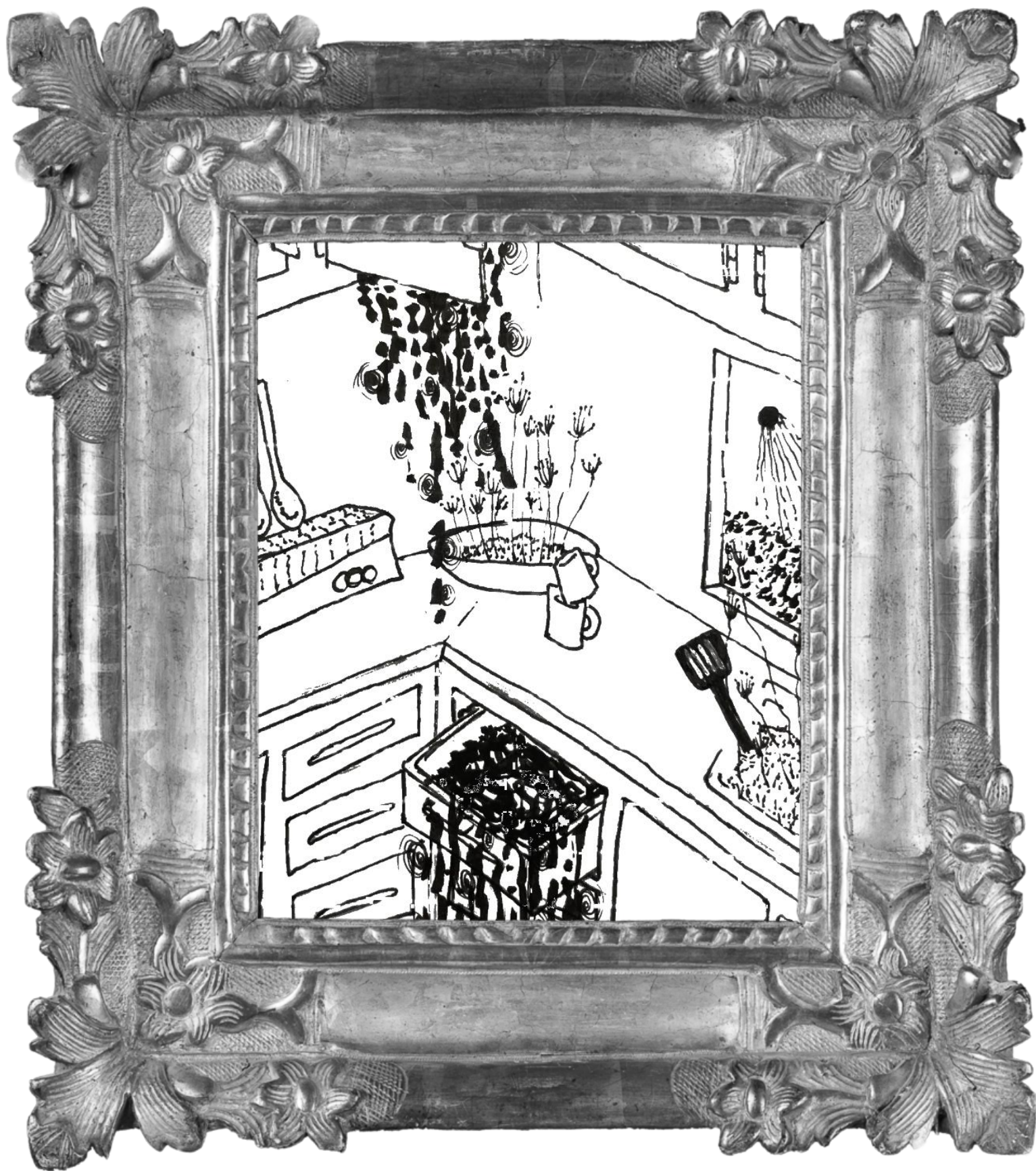
“pen” the seventh silence, by my count at least. “i’ll go now, you've helped” it gets up and goes. i watch it until its twelfth step, at which i look away, up at the leaves, beyond them that gray cloud and the white water it sprinkles over the land. it obscures the pinkish turn of the sky and the little shadow of a figure straying further and further. more and more miniscule in sight but more and more substantial in mind. shining teeth, deft, dim eyes, unkept, though far from unruly black hair just over its shoulders. a demeanor, fully transforming me into a play thing. it's terrible to analyze a person in such a sort. i'm compensating, god! i'm compensating. subjectively objectified by what i called a “medical gaze” i began guard, seeking vengeance for something i'm not even sure was meant to be harmed, effectively dehumanizing it.

i sit a while longer, it's getting colder. i think few thoughts, something about the face, something about the land, something about tomorrow, and something about the weather. few feelings just as so. little joy, little longing, little boredom, and with a light, cold breeze, little shiver. i feel my skin.

its time to go. on the way back home, the things that pulled my interest coming here just feel played and drab, though i should say, not middling. one, two, three, one, two, three.

“mask my mind little finger in time, galavant, cheer, feel merry. turn the clock's hand, man gallow and then make siege for the queen and her people. you being one, only with gun at hip and at hand eight ton ship, amidst the sea you be without ticking, just living and flicking those damned flies away, gaily and merrily and cheerfully, and never, never, no never drearily”

mom's car's in the front. i open the door, she's asleep on the couch, she cooked “goodnight” i go to bed.



chapter six
"monday"

haha! morning moon, come soon sun and swallow whole the new and old. It's awfully cold, terribly so. i left my window open, or i didn't. it's open either way. sweet spring call and thin sunlight, it's 6:20, monday. how could i call it sweet, i must have mistaken it for the now so apparent warmth of my bed. slowly i fall, 6:47. i get up, i look down, i contort my toes and fall flat. rising with a light sickness and fleeting craving for choice, im at a desk. first period. i couldn't tell the time, the clocks are covered and the sky's giving me the silent treatment. god! my head moves so slow in the morning. at the moment, it feels like i can hardly get out half a thought. during such mornings, it feels im catatonic and slack. i can't even focus on my lack of poignance, i simply follow orders, these tending to be directions to take notes and walk, it's merely monday, there isn't much to say. it could end here couldn't it?

it won't though, ha! it never does. we drop a lot, we never drop dead though do we? us i mean. why not us? there's light snoring, scattered and muffled. i should say if you're overly attentive, no one is. am i? no, no one is, not in this room at least. mrs. clanschk doesn't demand participation. her students don't welcome command, why would they?

ah! my head, i'm stuck on it, i can't even be properly angry, i can't even loathe. my head is just so far past me. lapsing, lapse and lapsing. "and what do we call that?" silence. "ionic compound" christ.

alright, second hour's over. great. i don't mean it, it's even more sickening, it's much easier to question your place when said place isn't set out for you. it's lunch period. putrid putrid putrid. christ! near every time i just sit in mr. merith's room, he leaves the door unlocked and takes the period to smoke. and if that be situationally untrue, i sit in the bathroom. excuse me, i know it's pathetic. no, never mind. it's not, it's just sensical. it gives me time to read, an hour. where is it? unfortunately i didn't bring karamazov with me, it's fine, i'm sure the school has a copy.

hello school librarian. "hey"

"hiya. what do you need?"

"do we have brothers karamazov"

"by who?"

"theodor dostoyevski"

"i would look in classics, its three down, author alphabetical back to front"

"thanks"

ravenous, inconvenient abstractions. i think about three weeks ago, i dropped yogurt on the living room carpet and wasted an hour of my life cleaning it, murmuring “austen, emma. poems, bronte. the flowers, baudelaire. the fall, camus.” my eyes scan the many spines, again, so uncanny. i feel the embarrassment and guilt of it, mere yogurt. no, it's not just yogurt, i miss vera, i miss dad, i miss having a head. how fine, no karamazov. it's really okay, at the moment i'm a knotted hair where my head should be. emma passes red corduroy and falls into the depths of my bag. i make leave.

“was there a copy?” i keep walking.

“no” a headache's approaching.

“i'll put it in orders.” from looking back at his bald head, i inadvertently scan the room and *view* people. it's 10:08 and i have another fifty minutes until i'm back to class. my headache remains low and lacking power. i'm just bored. it's not abnormal, i go to the bathroom, sharing glances with the red tin of voidlike cabinets. daylight refracts upon and amplifies the red light of those cabinets. i mean lockers. i dont have one, i just don't get the turning and clicking. that's one of those inconvenient abstractions, i suddenly and it seems uncontrollably fixate on my inability to use a turning lock. another petty thing. i turn, sharply as i was adjace the bathroom door. it must have been aggressive, this person has an awfully disgusted expression. i glance and pass, i sit in the stall. i should be more bothered by it but really i don't feel any certain way about the greenish light, the cold porcelain or. of course, its a bathroom. “emma woodhouse” in my reading, people occasionally go by and bye. “you got a lighter?”

“no, i know nolan has one”

“thank god”

i stand on the toilet and peek over.

“shit. i left it.”

“what?”

“my pot.”

“dude, where?”

“one of my spots, but i think ms. marin's on to me man. she's been looking at me weird.”

“naw she wants you.” a laugh and leave.

i may want to find or at least search for this alleged “pot”. i must be bored out of my brain. mind i mean. i must be oh so openly sad. slow steps pacing here and there, both those vague places within a stall. im the only dramatist without a curtain call. i miss music. aha! my dad's old discman. it would

be so wondrous if only it were here and well, in a better state than its in, tattered in the cavern. “god damn it, god damn it, god damn it!” i feel narrowly comfortable saying it. i sit the last forty minutes away, in silence, of course not without its interruptions, indifference, and dreamy placelessness. wispy, like a plank. the bell rings, muffled. i walk out just as immediately, i had put emma back maybe ten minutes ago, it gets funny how catatonic i get. its like i was asleep, i mean all i recall of whatever i was thinking is so vague! like a post-it note written over in sloppy half english, like soundless mouthing. i hum on my way to class, in mere bits i'm embarrassed but more than that i'm obsessed with what i used to hold that book. my hands. class. class. a command, i comply. a bell, i go home. where do i go from here? outside of course.

chapter seven
"tuesday"

goodmorning. idle bodied with that vignette around my eyes. shooting like a glance i feel my lack of control, the image i saw in that glance is entirely obscured by my living silhouette. i understand now, my aunt is right, i am pompous. i believe im alive.

no matter really, i tie my laces and drag my body. dragged, i practice algebra, dragged i read julius caesar, dragged i'm seated in the restroom. my eyes are caught, in the paneled, now ever so moveable ceiling, i see an envelope, a thick orange mailer. i sit and remain, i'm no longer occupied with my past, the size of my nails. my height, or when it's been long enough between library visits. the orange paper is alluring but i would rather not intrude, additive, emily's just now getting good. i begin to shake a little, there's one other person here, i stand where i've sat, looking over the stall door. the other occupant leans against the sink, looking down. okay, i'll take it. but! i won't read it, not yet. carrying the burden, i leave, christ! i should really get a watch. i approximate another twenty minutes of whatever. this, whatever.

twenty minutes. now once more, to class. somethings up with me. i take and enact orders but since this morning i've felt five feet from my body. i must be hungry. christ! i should start eating. i should start thinking. i could swear i've said this before, but i should start writing. why think if those thoughts fade and disappear. no, i want to think, its good to no. no. thats idiotic, for me, in this etch of time: thinking is neither good nor bad. it may be entertaining or an occupying act but in all truth i feel that's where feeling comes from. and that is bad, feeling is absolutely terrible. "properties of isosceles trapezoids, angle a is congruent with angle b. on the diagram, a is top left and b is top right, keep in mind depending on the way the shape is depicted, that statement may not be true," swarm. flies buzzing, white noise. i'm not thinking anymore.

i take notes. i complete worksheets. i disguise myself in the off occasion that i may be picked for verbal acknowledgement. between classes i am surprised. gabriel. it's such a small school and i never noticed his attendance here. "hey" i hear him, that's all. my progress report: mostly b's, gpa 3.2 with little else to note.

chapter eight
"wednesday"

goodmorning. i awake tragically reflective or retrospective. i'll reiterate, school's not very far away or even concerning. into socks. a ridiculous sort of statement. in freshman year i had to wake up at 4:30 to make a two hour long bus ride into the city, it was a long ride. excruciating for that fact alone. i don't want to give mind to the people i've known and left, i've taken that trip too often lately. i should say it doesn't matter we weren't all that close or that never i truly knew them or that they never knew me. or renounce the possibility that they'd even care about knowing me. not a single one. i liked the city, or that centralized, uncanny, active air. into pants. centralized, uncanny, active. like people. the city is human. oh god. but i hate the city.

what's wrong with me? it's only space! there is no cause or intent in space, not even a semblance of conscience. then again it can be so hostile, so comforting, so oppressive, so nurturing. the city is familial. the city is like mother, mother only if you get too close. im lucky then, ive well kept my distance. that feels sad in parts, my distance. i revoke it, the choice is my own. all has naturally progressed this way. my change or will to change or notion that i should possess the will to change even. its unnatural, artificial. but thats weak! weak. hopeful. faithful, its the only way to be happy. thats the goal isn't it? happiness. how far or close am i from such a thing, when did i have it? was i fine then? i wont even answer, because. because that is not the goal. the goal of the individual can't be happiness. such a thing can be unattainable from birth, the goal must be something commonplace, universally attainable, and of feasible supply to demand. it must be satisfaction, satisfaction at life. not to be at an admirable point in it or to feel pride, but to be prepared for death. yes! blink to die. i blink. my lids close, and open. i still sit here. now again i ask, with the complete intent to answer: have i attained it?

that must be rhetorical. hmm. with that feeling of being prepared or the finality and success of it, there are several discrepancies. fluctuation as one, awareness as another. there are also counters, thats only the philosophical, individual fulfillment of this. its selfish. then again, for me to make up some collective intent or ideal is. again, though an understatement, selfish. for the sake of filling in holes though, i think i should consider the biological function of the most uncanny, unnatural species. well to be just that i guess. truth be told, it may be primitive but you're only good or 'intelligent' under the analysis of another 'intelligent' analytical being. an isolated person though, with no one to hear or be heard by, edges on nonexistent, only as valuable as its mass. thats a given, i guess it only serves to embody the importance of community. i don't really feel i have it in me to go further than that. empathy, empathy and perceptiveness and communication are essential and. i lack them all. i have succeeded in the individual goal but until that will manifest to occurrence, i have to fulfill the collective. wait no. i'm doing exactly what i said shouldn't be done. it doesn't even matter. looking at the clock. a little red hand glides along pale white face. ghoulish till garish some wayside set to perish. merriment for the clinician with painful painlaying intention.

i blink through the walk to school, a skittering little moment right through and out of my skull.

“hey” why does he want to talk to me, i have nothing for you. “gabi” i say in a surprisingly hospitable manner, an unwelcome surprise to the speaker who i am, though its sure to be a surprise for the listener he is. “

chapter nine
“thursday”

goodmorning. my will to kill outweighs yours. you, mirror. of lacking passion, of lacking substance, of lacking humanity. dense, my skull is full of clay. wait. have i thought this before? said this before? the embryo of vertigo looms near, and as, some malevolent faust possesses me. slight silence is blaring. deathly murmurs of monotony. do not, *not* let echo such evil. i hold my chest, its protrusions. my heart kicks, swells, pounds. reach and rise. i can now see my chest, squirming with breath or air. an unfair lack of control, enthralled. pain, awful hurt!

missing rapture will you die-- cry emily!

put up a fight and this is not life like e-mi-lee!

though she lived with me! i dont know the chick!

yeah but i know a whole lot about thursday.

katie-ok! sarah? i lived just like the stoner girls--

on thursday.

chapter ten
"friday/ clover"

that envelope, it's contents. it's paper, pages and pages drawn and written over, scrawled in ink, graphite, and paint. there are sticky notes on each one, "1" here "5" there, i presume it's the intended reading order of this work. beginning with "1":

im diverting, i want to be on my knees before you, i was debating whether i deserve the closure of apologizing or whether you'd care to hear it -m

2: *"if you feel like you need to but i hope you know that i'm fine, really. but it's better if you'd tell me tomorrow though. please" -n*

3: *elaborating: "that's just where i'm happiest, knelt beside you. said with no cause really, i understand you're past it, i think i'm just at the bargaining stage." -m*

4: *"if you thought i could forget about it all so easily you're so wrong. i've learned so much from your experience, i couldn't forget no matter how hard i try to. its absolute hell when i remember, because i know ill never get what i want ever again. i know you're moving on, i know i need to as well. i do wish you the best of luck with" it's something scratched out "i want you to keep that shit as far away from me as possible." -n*

5: *"really?" more, scratched out. "are you jealous?" reading begins to get draining in a way, it feels voyeuristic. there aren't names or dates or places. it's just their feelings and wants, i find the writers awfully indulgent, in themselves and their opposites.*

6: *"don't even, it's so obvious and she avoids me now, shut up i am not jealous, i was in mourning, also its very obvious" of course "she likes you, me having absolutely no faith in the male species, i assume the worst. i never felt anything against her, more or so i directed it all at you."*

7: *"good to know. for better or for worse, i still have a certain emotional allegiance to you, synonym: im sure of and passive to the fact that i love you, i just don't want that to encumber you, contrarily i don't want it to be ambiguous, i can't morally propose more than friendship and even that feels selfish."*

8: *"thanks, appreciated. i don't really want that though. a friendship is pushing it. we can be nothing more than an acquaintance. we should swear on that right here and now that it won't progress into anything more until i am completely confidently over and done with you. i think i still need to despise you, or maybe just frequently remind myself of why i can't be with you. i may keep avoiding you, so don't be surprised. sorry if that's unfair. just know i could never truly hate you"*

9: *"i don't want you to be over me, that said i don't want you harmed. i'll swear to suppress my feelings for you, and to remain with distance until i've passed. only though, if it benefits you. so with finality, must i?" i can't bear reading any more, i return the pages to there, nevermind, i have time.*

10: *"making that decision is beginning to scare me. i'm saying yes because i'm being responsible for myself, but another part of me is screaming not to let it die. this is excruciatingly painful. can i tell you my favorite moments before i close the window"*

11: *"tell me"* as a little detour before several pages masking taped together, that being the twelfth.

12: *"- it was the first time we ever heard each other's voices. over the phone, i was at my dad's brand new house. you corrected me on the pronunciation of "bjork"*

- you came to school after missing the first few weeks. you were leaning on the rail by the main buildings side doors, crutches in hand, your foot concealed in a bulky white cast. instant recognition, i felt something arise, and i thoughtlessly approached you only to say hello.

- on the floor in the library aisles, you wrote me something in your notebook, you were confused. you wondered if i was 'the savior' or 'the apostle. we couldn't part to go to class. you lead me into the basement, we talked, we played dress up, we fought with sticks, then you changed your mind, you said to forget about the savior and apostle. that we were fine as friends then. i went along with it at the time. i wasn't disappointed because i felt so confident that i'd get what i wanted eventually.

- it was the first time we ventured past the train tracks. across from the highway we were walking on wet soil. heading nowhere. to our left was a land of dirt. i remember i was confused and uncomfortable, but i can't remember what you said, i just know this was a moment that caused me to question everything you ever said. it went like this: 'so you Don't like me?' 'that would be the most truthful thing i've ever told you', something along the lines of that.

- in the blanket room, the one in the theater. i was scared out of my mind, i could barely breathe. i felt like you were going to kill me in there. and you basically did.

-standing on a train with its engine on, i was soaking wet, i dumped the bottle of water over my head. "i wanted to be cold" then you referred to "frozen warnings" by nico or maybe "take me out" by red house painters. standing in opposition with only the gap and coupler in between. you pulled me in. you guided my hands to the skin of your back, i read the curves and indents in your spine, then i held you there for a while and that was when i lost my sense of time and reality. i think in that moment, i knew i loved you. but im not too sure. my attachment grew more intense, i can say confidently.

- the scaffolding, you were too scared to go too high up. we sat there together, slightly cold. we were both sitting in frustration, i dragged you too far from comfort and kept you with me for too long. you told me to guess what you were about to say before you ruled it as premature. i knew, but i didn't think you were telling the honest truth. which was the only reason why i said "you better not tell me you love me" "damn," you said. "that was literally-" and then you laughed at the sequence of our dialogue.

those are only a fraction of my favorite memories” -n

and thirteen, 13: “you’ll always have me, i swear separation.”-m. what a good end! that it could’ve been i should say, there are more but i’ve really, really read enough. it feels like immediately after the thought comes; the bell rings. the first twelve and the envelope lay used, i return them to their old bounds and i go to class. awfully cheery in that characteristic ashridden musk, “mornin’ class. get out your textbooks and turn to 143. we can group read starting at ‘to bridge the gap’ i’ll give you mmm. eighty seconds” that “mmm” always irks me. i sit beside the window, looking into the atrium, seniors with there semi-subservient underclassmen linger just as pigeons, who are just about comfortable pulling sustenance as pickings from there trash. i sit, very aware of time every second of the length merith introduced as “eighty seconds” however inaccurate. merith clears his throat. faintly among the class a beeping. “beep beep” and a fair share join in, the entire class is alarming. “beep beep” high pitched oh god i feel so bug-eyed. i must’ve looked so bewildered at their act. dispelled now, “okay okay okay, class!” quieted. blink and complete silence. my gaze is soft and getting softer, eyes low and lower to a dusty congestion. i feel warmer and warmer until nothing. tap tap tap. i was asleep, “hey. we were reading, ya missed it. don’t sleep in my class” i slept through class. “catch up to 199” ok. now it’s the final hour again, one more class. i walk late and limp. i miss being asleep, i don’t like being reminded of how warm and unworried it is. i don’t like that i’m barred from returning. haha. barred, i am, just as i get to the door, barred. a few sets of eyes target me before im seated. i deflect them in gray for wallowing sinnows sometime swelling don’t make me mr. knightley tonight we see colony despite the “spite of sickness” untimely. then, i am seated, barred. asleep? no. im nearer the- let me. think.

nadir. opposite of apex. nearer the nadir of awakesness. everything gradually fades out before clarifying itself. unfortunately i don’t have the attention to render this clarified form. that’s about enough of this, goodnight.

for a while goodnight, interrupted by the call of my name.

“poetic living. or romanticism? that’s all writing isn’t it?” once more my name, patronizing. “make an argument, is all writing romantic?”

um. “not by genre, i know that’s not what you mean but yeah. ‘romantic’ yes, more than real life though i do think the brutality or dreamy-ness of literature outmatches life in moments.”

chapter eleven
"brutality"

fucking cooked, years later, summer before senior year. limp wristed and fluttering like black and white flashes seeing korn live and pulling at my cheek bones-- the aching pervades evilly may i remain beside you beautiful ghost. trenched in deep sorrow, falling to the floor in anticlimax. like when gabriel touched me, and alexandra, and penelope. but it is how it is, lying on my back with my arms cross-folded behind me. headphones on, pixies album, debaser! i am un-chien! andalousia-- i am un-chien! andalousia. . . slicing up eyeballs! and the flies outside, living in the city with my sister. the buzzing of taxi hailers and fuck shit is beneath the pixies. "babe-babe-babe! fuck your mother!" slamming the door on her boyfriend. nameless-- shameless, walking down the stairs.

that brings recollection on that experience though, the one that makes me smile-- absolutely giddy when it all vibrates. korn live, adidas jump suits just kind of kicking shit. mick and my goosing, i love them all still and contact is existent. he got me into pavement, then the kinks. and just all around the world i mean we blossomed together, nerding. belle and sebastian, just being nauseatingly twee. or no wave, xtc, echo and the bunnymen "self doubt and selfism were the cheapest things i ever bought" shimmy, pivot, bla-bla then marijuana, the rest is history-- hahaha! but if i were tasked to go back there i mean, dreaded town and addiction to extremity. i see it now in myself that i just wanted to be moved, to real tears or uncontrollable laughter. it was rude to title my lovers anticlimactic, i mean gabriel and alexandra got me there. pen was weird but romantic, tantalizing oddity. i dont blame her aunt for throwing away the dead birds or making her sleep at night. it can be that simple sometimes, sleeping. we spoke for maybe six months, taught each other how to kiss. then gabriel, backgrounded during that, he was fine with waiting and i think he still wants me now. a full year, it was exhilarating though massively envy birthing-- watching him play. alone or among a crowd. i remember that flat reverence that i think, lit the light of doubt in me. then alexandra, what a peach.

new york city public high school is the situation. wild imaginations on the grimier tin, crowder halls, beautifuler people, and more! misery! oh beauty hit me hard, cyenna vasquez: third hour redhead-- open arms im fucking sold. i simmer, what would used to have been a shiver at my incrementation and marketing of relations. so sex sells, but the glummity of muck runs me tired-- though i find a way to stay wired. cooked because its damn hot in this apartment but also the lit bowl in the bathroom. hiking like a viking through the alps, punch poetry sticky notes litter the room. the window, like a floating small door to inner city circuitry. street pacers dragging cigarettes, baggage, imaginary but you know the kinds of guilt clouds and ego subservience. yellow vehicles. dont bore me with the bees! fuck i should watch this movie, my friend andrew told me the lyric is actually a salvador dali film, not my kind of painter. a wash of a surrealist, but a filmmaker? color me intrigued. yes lets compliment this color: bored. hungry! a pawn to sensation! and click, creak, back in the room. the buzzing day brings about no new infliction, im always coming to my senses. chat about moving to chicago, she thinks we both want to go to school there, simple. 'like a cleaner new york', shrugging off such topics. her boy and her job. my friends and sights. in bed after the loafing of an off day i feel like one of those many dim lights. of course i am, and it all is reduced to a quietly frustrating simplicity before the dream.

the second of two notes to *her*
dads home, life really does go on.

